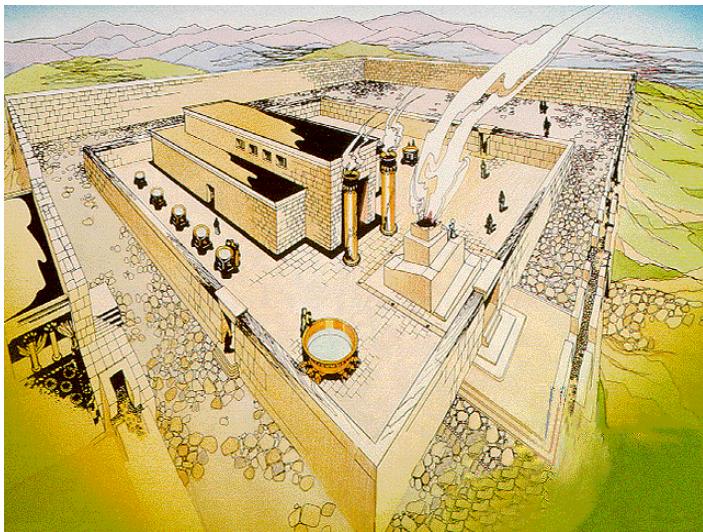


The Book of Hebrews

10. Christ our sacrifice



The whole purpose of the *Old Covenant* was to point to Messiah, who would die for the sins of the world. By His sacrificial death, the Messiah would usher in the greater covenant, the *New Covenant*. The death of Christ was the permanent and perfect sacrifice.

In Hebrews chapter 10, the contrast between the Old and New Covenant continues. In chapter 9, the writer to the Hebrews examined the tabernacle, and its sacrifices. How they were copies of the reality in Heaven. In 10, we contrast the meaning of the sacrifice; we see the sacrifice of the Old as only a shadow compared to the picture. Christ is the reality of sacrifice portrayed in the shadow of the Old Covenant.

Christ, the Perfect Sacrifice

The law was a shadow

Verses 1-4
Hebrews 10

- 1 For the law, having a shadow of the good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with these same sacrifices, which they offer continually year by year, make those who approach perfect.
- 2 For then would they not have ceased to be offered? For the worshipers, once purified, would have had no more consciousness of sins.
- 3 But in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year.
- 4 For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins. Hebrews 10:1-4

The law: The writer of Hebrews is referring to the *Law*, meaning the Mosaic system of sacrifice, established in Mt. Sinai.

Having a shadow: The Greek word, *skia&skia* (skee'-ah); means an image cast by an object and representing the form of that object. This is only a form of what is to come. This concept of shadow, symbol, type and figure is a theme repeated in the book of Hebrews. (See Hebrews 8:5, 9:9,11,23, Colossians 2:17)

The very image: Shadow is contrasted to picture, or the Greek word *eikwn Eikon*, meaning image, figure or likeness. An *icon*, as we are familiar with the word, is the painted image of Christ, Mary or some saint, the word is a transliteration of the Greek. The contrast between the Old and New Covenants is the difference between a picture and a shadow.

Can never...make...perfect: The sacrifices of the Law were merely a shadow contrasted to the picture of Christ. The sacrifices needed to be offered yearly, in particular *Yom Kippur*, the *Day of Atonement* required the High Priest offer sacrifice for himself and the nation.

The sacrifice was imperfect, evidenced in its yearly repetition.

Not have ceased: The author of Hebrews uses this logical point to prove the Law's imperfection. He asked a rhetorical question in verse 2, if the Law is able to restore those who approach, then why do they keep making sacrifices. If the Law is the end, then sacrifice would have stopped after restoration.

Consciousness of sins: The Greek word *suneidhsis Suneidesis* has to do with man's innate awareness of wrong in his life and of his sense of guilt because of it. The same word is used in Hebrews 9:9,10:22 and 13:18. The sacrifice of an animal never cleared the guilt of sin, the awareness of debt, as the *New Covenant* does for those who trust Christ.

Reminder of sins: The sacrifice served the purpose of illustrating the necessity of blood, for sin. The penalty of disobeying God required a penalty, the illustration was imperfect because it is repeated every year. The animal's death, its blood goes back to the garden where God sacrificed the first animal, as a covering for Adam and Eve, after their sin.

Also for Adam and his wife the Lord God made tunics of skin, and clothed them.

Genesis 3:21

Blood of bulls and goats: On the *Day of Atonement* the High Priest first offered a young bull for his own sin, then a goat, chosen by lot, for the sins of the people. (*Leviticus 16:1-13*). This was in addition to sacrifices for individual sins. Sacrifice by an insincere heart invalidated the sacrifice, God wanted sincere sacrifices, a contrite heart. (See also *Psalms 50:8-12; 51:16* *Isaiah 1:11-15; 66:3* *Jeremiah 6:20; 7:21,22* *Hosea 6:6; Amos 5:21,22; Micah 6:6-8;*)

11 "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices to Me?" Says the Lord. "I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams And the fat of fed cattle. I do not delight in the blood of bulls, Or of lambs or goats.

12 "When you come to appear before Me, Who has required this from your hand, To trample My courts?

13 Bring no more futile sacrifices; Incense is an abomination to Me. The New Moons, the Sabbaths, and the calling of assemblies-I cannot endure iniquity and the sacred meeting.

14 Your New Moons and your appointed feasts My soul hates; They are a trouble to Me, I am weary of bearing them.

15 When you spread out your hands, I will hide My eyes from you; Even though you make many prayers, I will not hear. Your hands are full of blood.

Isaiah 1:11-15

Jesus our perfect sacrifice Verses 5-10

5 Therefore, when He came into the world, He said: "Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, But a body You have prepared for Me.

6 In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin You had no pleasure.

7 Then I said, 'Behold, I have come-In the volume of the book it is written of Me-To do Your will, O God.' "

8 Previously saying, "Sacrifice and offering, burnt offerings, and offerings for sin You did not desire, nor had pleasure in them" (which are offered according to the law),

9 then He said, "Behold, I have come to do Your will, O God." He takes away the first that He may establish the second.

10 By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. *Hebrews 10:5-10*

When he came: The picture of Messiah being God's perfect sacrifice is revealed in the Old Testament. The Holy Spirit through David, spoke of the incarnation a thousand years before the time. Here the author Hebrews quotes from *Psalm 40:6-8*, demonstrating the incarnation would accomplish what sacrifice and offering of animals cannot. Messiah's death is pictured in *Isaiah 52:13-53:13* and *Psalm 22*. The Holy Spirit spoke through David, in *Psalm 22:1* one thousand years before the crucifixion, David proclaimed Christ's words, spoken at the cross.

My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me? Why are You so far from helping Me, And from the words of My groaning?
Psalm 22:1

He said: The "He" is the Holy Spirit speaking through David in *Psalm 40*. This quote contrasts the "Shadow" from the "Image". The shadow is "Sacrifice and offering" while the image is "A body prepared".

Then I said: Christ fulfilled what was written about Him before the incarnation. The "**volume of the book**" The whole of scripture testifies to Jesus Christ, either directly through prophecy or indirectly through metaphor, figure or shadow. Jesus after healing the man at the pool, responds to those who questioned his identity. He identified Himself as being the center focus of scripture.

"You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me.

"But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life.

John 5:39-40

takes away the first: The first system was removed, "The Shadow" was removed or set aside for the "Image" (Icon).

we have been sanctified: The Greek word, **adjiazō Hagiazo** means to be separated out, to separate from the profane, dedicated to God. When a person comes to Christ, they are "born again", the person is "Sanctified" separated out from the world. The sacrifice of Christ's **body** has separated out those who put their faith in him. This is in contrast to the daily and yearly sacrifice of the first system. Christ sacrifice was "**once for all**", there was no other sacrifice needed.

A Contrast between Christ and the Law Verses 11-18

11 And every priest stands ministering daily and offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins.

12 But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God,

13 from that time waiting till His enemies are made His footstool.

14 For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified.

15 But the Holy Spirit also witnesses to us; for after He had said before,

16 "This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the Lord: I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds I will write them,"

17 then He adds, "Their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more."

18 Now where there is remission of these, there is no longer an offering for sin.

But this Man: In verses 11 and 12 the ministry of the priesthood is contrasted to that of Christ (this man). We see several contrasts in chapter 10, shadow verses image, first verses second, **priest** (Aaron) verses this man (Christ). The priest was required to offer sacrifices daily verses Christ who offered one sacrifice, Himself.

From that time: From the time of Christ death, until his *Second Coming* is a period of decision, known as the "Church Age" or time of the Gentiles (Romans 11:25). During this period, the **enemies** of Christ are manifested. The true nature of man is demonstrated, in this present time. One day all of God's enemies will acknowledge Him, regardless of their wishes.

9 Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name,
10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth,

11 and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.
Philippians 2:9-11

Made his footstool: The common practice of vanquishing kings was to make the kings and rulers of who opposed victory bow before the victorious king's feet in submission, this same imagery is demonstrated here. (See also Joshua 10:24, I Corinthians 15:25)

One offering: The sacrifice of Christ is all that God required for payment of sins, nothing can be added to complete our salvation.

Perfected forever: When we are sanctified, we are separated forever, but our righteousness with God is not our own but Christ's righteousness, given to us who believe as a gift.

17 For if by the one man's offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.)

18 Therefore, as through one man's offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man's righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life.

Romans 5:17-18

Being sanctified: The process of sanctification, (separation from the world) begins with a call from God's Spirit.

1. God Calls

"No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day.

"It is written in the prophets, 'And they shall all be taught by God.' Therefore everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to Me. And He said, "Therefore I have said to you that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted to him by My Father."

John 6:44-45,65

2. We Accept Christ

But what does it say? "The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart" (that is, the word of faith which we preach); that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.

Romans 10:8-9

3. God's Spirit dwells in us.

In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.

Ephesians 1:13-14

Holy Spirit witnesses: Through the prophet Jeremiah (Jer. 31:31), God proclaimed a day when a New and better covenant would come. This New Covenant would involve a relationship, where the man would have an innate understanding of God's **law**. God's will would be in **hearts** and **minds** of his people.

Remission: The Greek word *a^{felis}is Athesis* means release from bondage or imprisonment. Jeremiah speaks about the future covenant, this covenant has the distinct feature of forgiveness from sin.

Accepting Christ

19 Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus,
20 by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His
flesh,
21 and having a High Priest over the house of God,
22 let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled
from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.
23 Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is
faithful.
24 And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works,
25 not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but
exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.

Brethren: To understand Hebrews, we need to understand those addressed. The book of Hebrews has several different audiences. The audience is not just believing or struggling Hebrews, but also those who are searching. Brethren, "adelphos" can refer to spiritual as well as ethnic brothers. The Hebrews' audience, the "brethren", were related by a common blood, a common faith, and a common spiritual heritage. When Christ died, the way was open for the Jewish nation to have access to Holy of Holies, not in shadows, but in actuality. Believers have the ability to enter Heaven and petition God, before his throne.

Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Hebrews 4:16

The division between obedient and believing "Brethren" and disobedient and unbelieving "Brethren" is demonstrated in the 10th chapter.

In Hebrews 10:25 and 10:39 a distinction is made between these two groups of brethren.

- "not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some" 10:25
- 39 But we are not of those who draw back to perdition, but of those who believe to the saving of the soul. 10:39

Here the writer makes a distinction between these two groups. One group forsakes the "assembling of ourselves together" and "draw back to perdition". The other group believes to the saving of the soul. Both groups are addressed in the 10th chapter.

Having boldness: To enter God's presence is a bold act, The High Priest could only enter the "Most Holy", on the Day of Atonement. But with Christ sacrifice, God's presence

is available to all those who are sanctified by the "Blood of Christ" who have the gift of Christ's righteousness.

Enter the Holiest: In the Law, the "Most Holy" is the room that 10 by 10 cubits, where the "Arc of the Covenant" rests, where God's "Presence" would dwell. This was only available to the High Priest on the Day of Atonement. This was also a shadow of the reality to come. The reality was fulfilled by Christ's death, now we have direct access to God's throne. **The blood** of Christ has opened the door to God's presence, contrasted to the blood of bulls and goats, which could not.

Successful Christian Living Verses 22-25

Let us: The writer is addressing the fellow believers and giving instructions on successful Christian living. We all have power with God in Christ, but to utilize this power requires we approach his throne in Holiness. The Holy Spirit, through Hebrews gives us the reality, which was prefigured in the shadow.

1. Draw Near: The right to draw near to God's presence was at a great cost. The death and humiliation of Jesus Christ, God incarnate, opened our way. We need to comprehend this privilege. Before we approach God's Holiness there are some steps we need to take.

- a. **True Heart:** We need to be honest and true. We cannot deceive ourselves.
- b. **Full assurance of faith:** We need to believe fully in God's promises.
- c. **Hearts sprinkled:** We need to confess our own sinfulness, repenting from our evil thoughts.
- d. **Body washed:** We need confess and repent from bodily sins as well as sins from the heart.

2. Hold Fast: We need to persevere in our faith, not giving up when trials or persecutions come our way.

- a. **The confession:** Our hope is Christ, we need to turn to Him.
- b. **Without wavering:** We must train ourselves to not be moved by circumstances.
Many times God allows circumstances to test our faith, because through them He is glorified.

3. Consider one another: Our relationship with God, is related to our relationship to those who are made in His image. (I Corinthians 13) How can we serve God's kingdom through his people. There are four ways mentioned here.

- a. **Stir up love:** Be an instrument, or as the Greek word *paroxusmo^θ Paroxusmos* means, be an irritant for "Agape" or charity. Be proactive in charity.
- b. **Stir up good works:** Be also an instrument to cause the brethren to cause good.
- c. **assembling ourselves:** Church, Bible Studies, Fellowship and service with others.
- d. **Exhorting one another:** Come along the side of others, help and encourage those who are struggling.

Apostasy: Rejecting Christ

26 For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins,

27 but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries.

28 Anyone who has rejected Moses' law dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses.

29 Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace?

30 For we know Him who said, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord. And again, "The Lord will judge His people."

31 It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

32 But recall the former days in which, after you were illuminated, you endured a great

struggle with sufferings:

33 partly while you were made a spectacle both by reproaches and tribulations, and partly while you became companions of those who were so treated;

34 for you had compassion on me in my chains, and joyfully accepted the plundering of your goods, knowing that you have a better and an enduring possession for yourselves in heaven.

35 Therefore do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward.

36 For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise:

37 "For yet a little while, And He who is coming will come and will not tarry.

38 Now the just shall live by faith; But if anyone draws back, My soul has no pleasure in him."

39 But we are not of those who draw back to perdition, but of those who believe to the saving of the soul.

Sinning willfully
Verses 26-27

If we: The writer of Hebrews is referring to his total audience made up of both Jewish believers and non-believers. The non-believers have heard the message of the Gospel, and some have even responded and suffered for Christ. (Verse 33).

Sin willfully: The sin referred to here is the sin of apostasy, turning from the faith, rejecting Christ after hearing the message. *Judas Iscariot* is the best example of a New Testament apostate, others include *Demas* (II Cor. 4:10) and *Hymenaeus* and *Alexander* (I Tim. 1:20). Many who hear and respond do not necessarily respond to the biblical "Jesus" but to a other Jesus. *Mormons*, *Jehovah Witnesses* and *Muslims* all have a Jesus in their respective faiths. Their Jesus however, is different from the Jesus of the Bible, and each other.

After we have received knowledge of the truth: The Greek word for knowledge here is *epignwsis* *Epignosis* meaning precise and correct knowledge used in the New Testament, of the knowledge of things ethical and divine, contrasted to "Gnosis" which means general knowledge. Judas knew Christ, he lived with Christ, saw the miracles, ate with him and talked with him. Judas turned from Christ, and betrayed Him. The Hebrew Christians were experiencing the same, some were turning back and no longer in fellowship (verse 25, 39).

The **truth** received by Judas and the other apostates is precise, that Jesus Christ is the Messiah, Son of God, who died for our sins and was resurrected on the third day.

No longer: If Christ is rejected, there is no other option available to the apostate. Christ is the exclusive and only way to God.

Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.
John 14:6

Certain...judgment: Without Christ, there is certain judgment. There is no way to escape judgment for sins. Everyone who dies in their sins will pay for their sins.

Consequences of apostasy
Verses 28-34

rejected Moses' law: The law required 2 to 3 witnesses to put someone to death for violating the law of Moses. (Deuteronomy 17:7) Those who turned against the Law of Moses, faced God's wrath, those who turn against Christ will also face God's wrath. Jesus indicated the judgment on the cities and towns of Judah would be severe for rejecting his salvation.

21 "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.

22 "But I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for you.

23 "And you, Capernaum, who are exalted to heaven, will be brought down to Hades; for if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day.

"But I say to you that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for you."
Matthew 11:21-2

Of how much worse punishment: The wrath of God is on the cities that rejected Christ. In the same way, those who "apostate" from the faith will face a greater judgment then those who never heard, the greater the knowledge the greater the responsibility.

trampled the Son of God underfoot: By turning against Christ, they are rejecting his sacrifice, they are counting it as a common and unworthy event.

he was sanctified: The blood of Christ is what sanctifies the believer. The question many ask is was the apostate ever saved prior to apostasy?

There are several viewpoints on this issue. Each with its own following, here are three.

1. Salvation can be lost.

James Burton Coffman writes the following regarding this verse.

This is a return to the warning uttered in Heb. 6 regarding the final and total apostasy of persons who were once true Christians, concerning whom it was affirmed that it "is impossible" to renew them. Here, the reason for that impossibility is stated in the fact that the rejection of Christ's one sacrifice can only result in the sinner's being left with none at all, "there remaineth no more a sacrifice"! Of course, it would be a mistake to construe every stronghearted and presumptuous sin as "an eternal sin," although the danger that it might become so should never be overlooked.¹

2. Apostasy of believers will be judged with temporal judgment.(Earthly)
Walvoord and Zuck, write regarding this verse;

The words "Sanctified him" refer to true Christians. Already the writer to the Hebrews has described them as "Made Holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" (10:10) and as "Made perfect forever" through this sanctifying work (v. 14)....The author's whole point lies in the seriousness of the act. To treat "the blood of the covenant" (which actually sanctifies believers) as though it were an "unholy" (koinon, "Common" thing and to renounce its efficacy, is to commit a sin so heinous as to dwarf the fatal infractions of the Old Covenant. To this, an apostate adds the offense of insulting the Spirit of grace who originally wooed him to faith in Christ. This kind of spiritual rebellion clearly calls for a much worse punishment than the capital penalty that was inflicted under the Mosaic setup.

But again the writer was not thinking of hell.²

3. Those referred to here were not saved, but only seemed so.

Judas, was with Christ and his disciples, except for Christ they had no idea he was lost. From the beginning, Christ knew Judas was lost and did not believe even though he was a witness. He heard the Gospel and received the knowledge of truth. The Gospel never went further than his head, his heart never received Christ as savior.

70 Jesus answered them, "Did I not choose you, the twelve, and one of you is a devil?"

71 He spoke of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, for it was he who would betray Him, being one of the twelve.

John 6:70-71

Scripture clearly indicates, those who are truly saved cannot be lost, but those who turn away were never really saved. Their turning away, "Their Apostasy" is merely only the manifestation of their true state.

They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but they went out that they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us.

I John 2:19

The writer of Hebrews is warning both Hebrew believers and seekers here, what is at stake. There are two distinct groups indicated in verses 25 and 39. The apostates are not saved, but were view as part of the Hebrew body of believers. Both are addressed in this chapter. The writer distinguishes the saved clearly in the last verse by declaring

But we are not of those who draw back to perdition, but of those who believe to the saving of the soul.
Hebrews 10:39

¹ James Burton Coffman, Commentary on the Book of Hebrews.

² The Bible Knowledge Commentary, 1983, Walvoord & Zuck, New Testament, pg. 805-806